

A Demand-Driven-Preferred Approval Plan

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A Demand-Driven-Preferred Approval Plan

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Abstract

California State University, Fullerton's Pollak Library is working toward the goal of providing as much content in electronic format as possible. To address this need along with a shrinking budget for monographs, the Library recently moved to not only an e-preferred approval plan, but actually a demand-driven-preferred approval plan. Pollak Library had a successful demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) plan in place for some time, in which slipped approval plan titles were automatically added to the Library catalog and made available for short-term loan via DDA. With some slight workflow adjustments, approval plan titles that were sent automatically as books, rather than slips, are also being made available for short-term loan via DDA rather than being purchased automatically. Initial results demonstrate that both goals of providing more electronic content and saving funds are being met.

Introduction

In recent years, multiple models to support the patron-driven acquisition (PDA) or demand-driven acquisition (DDA) of library materials, especially e-books, have presented themselves. Like traditional approval plans, many e-book DDA programs rely on a profile created together by the library and the vendor to ensure that DDA records loaded into library catalogs are in line with collecting goals. As noted by Nardini (2011), "In effect patron-selection records become a new kind of 'slip,' always a basic element of approval plans for library selectors" (p. 35). It is appropriate that Nardini referred to DDA records specifically as "slips," as for libraries whose DDA program is an extension of an existing approval plan, it is often "slipped" titles that are automatically loaded into catalogs as DDA records. It is common for approval profiles to designate whether a book should be sent automatically, whether a notification slip should be sent, or whether the book should be excluded altogether based on subject, format, publisher, or a host of other criteria. Even if an approval plan supports a DDA program, approval titles designated to be sent as books (rather than slips) typically continue to either be shipped to the library as physical books or purchased outright as e-books. In this scenario, only those "slipped" titles for which e-book versions from a preferred provider are available are automatically added to the library catalog for DDA.

Since 2010, Pollak Library at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) has overseen a successful e-book DDA program with Ebook Library (EBL). In 2011, the EBL DDA program was incorporated into the Library's existing approval plan with YBP Library Services. If a title was designated by the approval plan to be sent to the Library as a notification slip and was also available as an EBL e-book, a record for that e-book was automatically added to the Library catalog to be made available for DDA. Titles designated by the approval plan as books continued to be sent to the Library automatically in print format, regardless of the availability of an e-book. Further edits were made to the approval profile to prefer e-books over print books by the start of the 2013–2014 fiscal year in July 2013. However, if a book was available electronically it would not be purchased outright, even if it had been designated as such by the profile. All books that were available as EBL e-books and designated by the profile to be sent to the Library as either books or slips would be made available for DDA. This paper details the reasons for this choice at Pollak Library, as well as initial effects of the change.

The Environment

With over 37,000 students, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) is the largest campus in the 23-campus California State University system. Pollak Library is the only library on campus, supporting the diverse disciplinary needs of the CSUF community. Supporting a primarily

undergraduate and master's level teaching institution, Pollak Library's collecting goals are to meet the curricular and research needs of the students and faculty.

The Library has been working toward the goal of providing as much content in electronic format as possible, due not only to the increasing number of online course offerings, but also to physical space constraints and a desire to provide broad offsite access for all students and faculty. In addition to the desire to provide broader access through electronic content, the Library's monograph budget was reduced by 77% from the 2006–2007 academic year to the 2012–2013 academic year. Therefore, both a review of the approval profile and a novel approach to providing access to new monographs within a drastically smaller budget were necessary.

Approval Plan Analysis and Revision

A review of approval plan receipts from the 2011–2012 academic year showed that of the print books that were sent automatically as books (rather than as slips or selections), 33% had been simultaneously published as e-books. In addition, while as a typical practice the Library does not collect textbooks, a number of textbooks had been received on the approval plan. While other profile adjustments were made, these two factors led to the most significant changes.

In line with the Library's goals to provide more content electronically, it was determined that the approval profile should be adjusted to "e-preferred" so that the Library would automatically receive e-books rather than print books when they were published simultaneously. However, as e-book versions may cost the same amount or more than their print counterparts, the transition to e-preferred alone would not help the budget situation. The Library's current DDA program dictated that a DDA e-book was purchased on the fifth significant use. As in most DDA programs, a significant use, such as downloading, printing, or reading the text online for more than five minutes, constitutes a short-term loan (STL). When a DDA e-book was purchased, four STLs had already occurred. With a cost of about 10% of the e-book's list price, an STL costs significantly less than purchasing an e-book outright. However, due to

the repeated STLs that occur before a purchase is triggered, if a DDA e-book is eventually purchased, then it has cost more in total than an initial, outright purchase would have been. With this in mind, while the approval plan would become e-preferred, it needed to be determined whether e-books sent automatically as books (rather than as slips or selections) should be purchased outright as the print books had been, or if they should be added to the DDA pool along with the e-book titles for which slips had been sent.

To assess this, circulation statistics of the 2011–2012 print approval plan receipts were analyzed. Essentially the goal was to answer this question: If all of the print approval books that arrived in 2011–2012 had been DDA e-books in the Library catalog, would they have been purchased by one year later? The answer was overwhelmingly no. A mere seven titles had circulated five or more times. Therefore, the Library would have seen significant savings (at least in the short term), by only paying for STLs rather than purchasing the content. This made it very clear that rather than purchasing e-books automatically, the Library would contribute more to the DDA pool whenever possible, essentially creating not only an e-preferred approval plan, but actually a DDA-preferred approval plan.

Workflow Adjustments

As may be expected, our approval vendor, YBP, did not have a system in place to send all e-books that were profiled to be sent as books to instead be sent as DDA e-books. YBP's GOBI system has a virtual "approval bookshelf." In an e-preferred approval plan, e-books to be sent automatically are loaded to the approval bookshelf. Following the tradition that print approval books may have been placed on a shelf in the library for librarians to approve or reject them, e-book titles on GOBI's approval bookshelf must be approved or rejected within one week. If no action is taken, then the titles are automatically purchased by the library.

GOBI also has a function in which selectors may choose to initiate a "manual DDA" request for other e-book titles. While most e-book titles are added to the DDA pool automatically when a notification slip is generated, other titles, which

may or may not have been profiled for the library, may be requested in this manual fashion and added to the library's catalog for DDA.

In order to have a DDA-preferred approval plan, Pollak Library made use of both of these GOBI tools. Because the approval plan is e-preferred, new e-book titles are loaded to the GOBI approval bookshelf weekly. Each week, Pollak Library staff mark all of the e-book titles on the approval bookshelf for manual DDA, a process that takes less than a minute per week. Records for these titles are added to the DDA pool in the Library catalog the following week. One unfortunate aspect of this process is that the e-book titles display a status of "rejected from the approval bookshelf" in GOBI.

Only when staff members view a more detailed status do they see that the e-book title was processed as a manual DDA request. A more detailed and automated solution would be desirable in the future.

Initial Results

Comparing the first quarter 2012–2013 approval plan receipts to the first quarter 2013–2014 approval plan receipts, initial results have been as expected. As demonstrated by Figure 1, fewer total books were received, but considering the removal of textbooks, an equivalent number of desired books were received, just over a third of which were e-books added to the DDA pool.

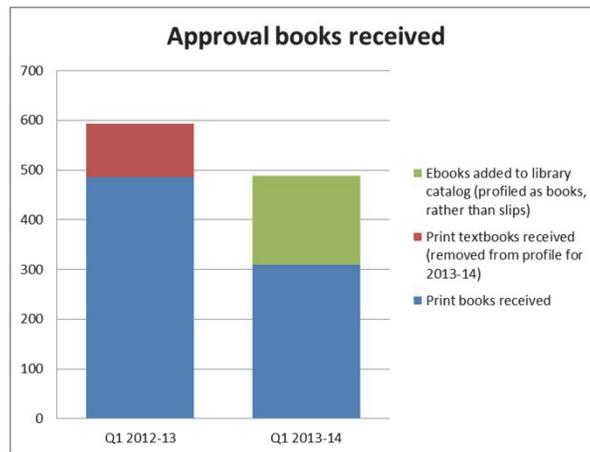


Figure 1. Approval Books Received in All Formats, Quarter 1 2012–2013 Compared to Quarter 1 2013–2014

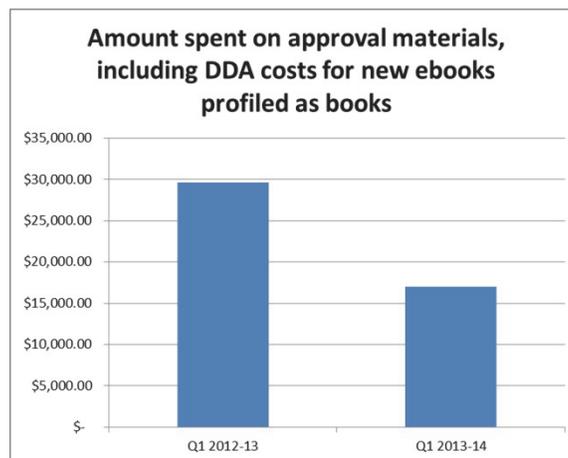


Figure 2. Total Amount Spent on Approval Books Received in All Formats, Quarter 1 2012–2013 Compared to Quarter 1 2013–2014

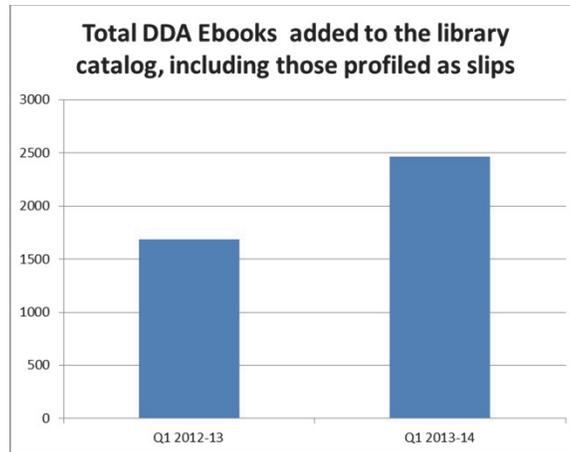


Figure 3. Total Number of E-Books Added to the Library Catalog, Quarter 1 2012–2013 Compared To Quarter 1 2013–2014

Also as expected, the amount spent on approval materials in the first quarter of 2013–2014 was much less than the amount spent in the first quarter of 2012–2013, as illustrated by Figure 2.

This cost savings has actually enabled the Library to add more e-books to the catalog than in previous years, allowing for a more diverse collection of which usage can be analyzed. Figure 3 shows the increased number of e-books added to the catalog in the first quarter of 2013–2014, as compared to the first quarter of 2012–2013.

In addition, the cost savings has also allowed the Library to slightly increase the budget for slip selections. At the same time of the approval profile review, improvements were made to the slip notification process, making better use of interdisciplinary descriptors for CSUF's unique

programs, such as Chicano/a Studies and Queer Studies. The financial savings from the approval plan are allowing selectors for these and other programs to build needed collections.

Conclusion

Thus far, the move to a DDA-preferred approval plan has had the desired effects: an increase in the availability of electronic content to the Library community, a more diverse collection, and financial savings. However, long-term effects will need to be monitored to ensure that both the increased per-title cost of highly used DDA e-books continues to save funds and that the collection continues to be diverse and relevant.

References

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